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NAMA - Who Fishes Matters

Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

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Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance



The Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance's mission is to restore and enhance an enduring marine system supporting a healthy diversity and an abundance of marine life and human uses through a self-organizing and self-governing organization.

For the past decade, we have set the standard for effective collaboration in the pursuit of one question: if we truly care about the health of our oceans does it matter how, where and when we fish; and, who catches the fish that end up on our dinner plates?



Who Fishes Matters.

If we care about the health of our oceans, fishing communities, and our food system, then who fishes matters.

The New England groundfish fishery is transitioning into a new 'Catch Share' management system, with its promises to improve ecological stewardship of our oceans. However, we know that uncontrolled 'Catch Share' programs around the world have consolidated into monolithic, industrial scale, non owner-operator fishing fleets. This direction undermines communities, ecosystems, and our food system.

Experience of U.S. farm policy has taught us that uncontrolled consolidation results in large-scale factory farming corporations driving out family farmers and degrading the land based environment, biodiversity, and security of the food system. It also destroys the fabric and vitality of farming communities. If we don't act, we can see the same pattern repeated on the water.

The New England groundfish fleet is already seeing signs of excessive consolidation and its dire ecological and economic consequences. The cost of

leasing quota and buying permits is skyrocketing. Quota and permits are migrating from small- and mid-scale to larger-scale more industrial operations. This puts community infrastructure at risk of collapse.

We saw this happen with farms in our land based food system; we won't let it happen with fisheries and our marine based food system.

New England can lead the way toward a new direction.

Join us and your voice to others who believe Who Fishes Matters.

For more information please visit www.namanet.org

"Fleet diversity is not only imperative for the betterment of our local communities, but for the preservation of our oceans." – NY Fisherman testimony June 2010

"If you honestly care about the fish stocks and future of our greatly diverse fishing fleet, we must consider some form of safety measures to ensure its survival." – MA Fisherman testimony June 2010



WHAT WE WANT

To ensure diversity of the fishing fleet and prevent excessive consolidation for the well being of the marine ecosystem, our fishing communities and our source of seafood.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

In order to protect the marine ecosystem, fishing communities, and our food system it is essential that New England maintain a diverse and locally based groundfish fishery, which includes a variety of gear types, vessel sizes, geographic locations, and levels of participation. Evidence shows that in order to recover fish stocks and the health of the ecosystem, diversity and scale of the fisheries should be well matched to the diversity and functional scales of marine species and the fishery ecosystem. Loss of fleet diversity and excessive consolidation of fishing power threatens to undermine regional and national conservation goals and requirements, our access to healthful food from the ocean, and the economic underpinnings of the region's fishing communities. It is urgent that fleet diversity and 'who fishes' be a top priority for New England fishery managers and decision makers.

NEW ENGLAND CAN TAKE THE LEAD

HERE ARE THE STEPS:

- Guarantee fishing (access/privileges) to a diversity of local fishing operations.
- Limit share of the catch of any one fisherman or fishing operation.
- Restrict catch to active fishermen (i.e. cannot be owned by large corporate interests, "absentee landlords" or investment entities.)
- Ensure affordable access for new fishermen looking to enter the fishery to using small to mid-scale boats.
- Use ecosystem-based science to determine total allowable catch for fish stocks and fish complexes.

WE ARE CALLING ON:

Fishermen; Fishing community members; Scientific community; Community organizations; Environmental and conservation community; Food system, local food and food sovereignty advocates; Government agencies responsible for fisheries management; Law makers; and, public supporters of local food providers and healthy oceans.

TO SUPPORT:

- Vision and actions that support fleet diversity.
- Learning lessons from national farm policy and regional fisheries policies that have failed, and applying those lessons to New England fisheries.
- Ensuring that those with the potential to catch the most fish don't end up controlling all fishing power.
- Heeding the advice of those fishermen who are *right now* watching their livelihoods, and those of family fishermen around them, disappear.

Who Fishes Matters.

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